2: Lorimer T-3 (1920-4; 1934-5) 1939 AV7 Burusho AV7

opportunity of utilizing. I should not, of course, have dreamt of offering advice or help—the reckless courage with which some travellers ply their medical ignorance has always horrified me—but I thought that some knowledge of birth-rites at home might enable me to follow Hunza procedure with more intelligence. But if an Englishman's house is his castle, the fortress-like home of the Hunzukuts is no less inviolable, and in the event I could no more have proposed to a Hunza woman to let me attend her confinement for mere scientific curiosity than I could make the same proposal to an English friend.

Like women in many other parts of the East, the Hunza woman bears her child in a crouching posture, which gives full play to her muscles—admirably developed by varied exercise and unatrophied by chair-sitting—and speeds up the period of labour. An experienced woman, usually her own mother, acts as midwife, while her husband guards the threshold and her brother the smoke-hole to prevent the instrusion of evil man or evil spirit. Within a week, as has been related, she is ready to receive visitors, and within a fortnight she is out of doors again doing light work in the fields.

There are, of course, no vital statistics available for infant or maternal mortality, but as far as my enquiries and observations extended, casualties are rare. This is not to be wondered at, since for countless generations Nature has here been at her beneficent work of weeding out inferior stocks, uninterrupted by soppy sentiment or misguided philanthropy. No C_3 girl baby can be reared in an incubator to die in childbirth or burden the community with D_4 offspring.

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
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whom I recognized as being a typical Hunzan. But the old fellow who caught my attention did so because he was so strange looking. He was slightly stooped, short of stature, looked very old, had a firm yet halting walk and a beard of bright henna red and wore a long brown coat that touched his boots. It didn't require intuition or even a keen mind to recognize that this man was not ordinary in any sense of the word and I remarked to Sultan Ali that this was someone with whom I would like to converse—by means of an interpreter, or course.

We headed the yaks over so we'd be directly in front of the two as they passed by, and Sultan Ali spoke to them. Then he turned to me with a smile and said, "You are quite right, there *is* something most unusual about this man. He says he's 105 years old today—it's his birthday—and he's come to pay his respects to the Mir."

I allowed myself to slide down off the beast's back as I asked Sultan Ali to introduce me to the fine old fellow and we shook hands. He said, "Salaam aleikum!" and I, too, said, "Salaam aleikum!"

I was really very happy and felt privileged to meet a grand old man like this!

I appraised him from head to foot, scrutinized every part of him—up, down, to the right, to the left—and I smiled as best I knew so as not to offend the fine old fellow. He was indeed a patriarchal old man, but he still looked in mighty fine fettle; he'd come from a little farm a few miles away, on foot!

The old man's name was Dado and he lived in Hasanabad. He has one son, two grandsons, three granddaughters and fifteen great-grandchildren. Dado has 10 close friends, all of whom are more than 95 years of age. Membership in that exalted group is hard to come by . . . a most restricted organization.

115 Now I didn't see his birth certificate and I might as
165 well tell you, right here and now, that no vital statistics are kept in Hunza. I accept the figure of his age as he told me but remember, I was not there at the time of his birth!

344 When I was through with my spasm of inspection
644 and admiration, we began to parade up the long driveway that led into the Mir's garden. This area is flanked on the right by space that looks as though it were a parking lot, and maybe that's exactly what it is, but instead of cars, the guests or members of the family park—or should I say tether—their horses and yaks in this area. Maybe now they park their jeeps there.
[493] The Mir owns two of them, but one, I understand, was away in Pindi being repaired. (Or was it the shambles and horrible wreck of a jeep that I came across a week later, on the road back to Gilgit?)

126 Now I noticed that the Mir, Ayesh, the doctor and Cec were coming along the roadway to meet us, and soon we joined forces and were gathered in one group. I thought this was the ideal time to take some photographs and, luckily for us, they were the best photographs we took on the entire trip. Photography is something that has never interested me and I had never
[122] taken half a dozen pictures in my life. Before leaving home, I did try to learn a bit about photography, but I couldn't learn enough fast enough.

124 When the fun, excitement and fast-flowing humorous remarks had subsided, I said to the Mir, "If you've nothing more important to do or if you would care to give me a little more of your time, we could start that question and answer session that I arranged with you for this afternoon."

"I am at your service," he replied pleasantly and with alacrity.

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
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CHAPTER 34

About the People of Hunza

164 THE CLAIMS made for the people of Hunza border on
165 the fantastic. It is claimed that there they live to be 140 and more years of age without trouble and that their mountain home is the genuine Shangri-la, where a man can live without worry or stress in perfect joy and happiness. The claim is also made that their men can sire children when they're 70, 80, 90 and even 100 years of age.

Yes, and another visitor to Hunza said that the women of 80 and 90 are as youthful and as beautiful as our own women of 30 and 40. Well, apart from the [644] Rani who I truly believe was one of the most beautiful women I have ever been privileged to see, I didn't notice anything spectacular about the women of Hunza.

123 Let me be even more frank . . . I hardly saw any women at all. Over the many miles of Hunza territory that I walked, I seldom saw a woman. I saw a few girls

7:Tobe C, T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
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here and there and most of them snickered, giggled and hid or turned their backs so that I couldn't see their faces, just as the girls and women did in Nagir. I did notice and pass many women constantly in the fields, but not once did I think that they even compared with our own attractive women . . . let alone surpass them! 123

Nor do I want you to get the impression that I am prejudiced. To me, at least, a woman can be beautiful whether she be black, yellow, tanned or white. I believe myself to be the kind of a man who shows no prejudice, at least where women are concerned, if you know what I mean!

Here I also want to state that it could be I was somewhat at a disadvantage. In the Western world, when one meets or sees a woman, it is usually at her best or close to it. Here the situation was, I admit, drastically different. I either saw them in the fields or coming or going to and from the fields to their homes or doing household chores in their homes. None of these occupational hazards would give a woman a chance to show herself at her prettiest or to her own best advantage.

I did not inquire as to the Rani's age. I am generally fairly bold but I just wasn't bold enough to pose that question to the Mir or to the Rani herself, although I had ample opportunity to do so had I the courage. 644 165

She would compare favorably in every way with any woman in her twenties. If I did not know her position and I were asked to estimate her age, I would say 24 or 25 but remember, she is the wife of the Mir and has borne him 9 living children, one of whom is married and another of whom is engaged to be married to the Prince of Chitral. Their eldest daughter is married to Yaseen Durishahwar and they have two sons, which means that the Rani is a grandmother. But I still insist that she doesn't look a day over 25.

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
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Hunza are more or less used to it. However, it does cause trouble with the eyes of the natives. It also weakens the lungs of some of the older women, who probably spend most of their time indoors during the cold months of the year.

I questioned the doctor and the Mir concerning prenatal care, but from what they told me, I could find no provisions whatsoever made for prenatal care outside the individual home.

The death rate at childbirth, they told me, was next to zero, but the doctor also mentioned that a woman would not consider going to a doctor for gynecological reasons under any circumstances. She would rather die. He also told me that before and after delivery of a child, Hunzan women do not know of any rest. The pregnant woman works harder and does more laborious jobs till the last day of the term, in the belief that hard and laborious work makes delivery easier and uneventful.

"But," he went on, "they are very careful in exerting themselves during the early days of conception. After delivery they are again up and doing again, only after a short rest."

It seems to be obvious that the method followed by the women of Hunza prior to childbirth "works" because both mother and child come out of it "uneventful." When events occur at such times, it usually means serious trouble.

He went on to tell me further that gallstones, renal calculus, coronary heart disease, hypertension, valvular lesions, myxoldeama thyrsotoxcasis, mental deficiencies, cancer, poliomyelitis, arthritis and diabetes are absolutely unknown in Hunza.

From what I have seen and gathered I am worried about the situation. They are now importing their sugar,

their salt and soon there will be a few more items added and, as more of their people go out of the country to earn a living and come back to visit or retire, more of civilization's curses will be brought back with them.

The doctor rather clearly indicated that infant mortality was not as low as some writers would like us to believe. I repeat—he made this quite clear.

Now I'll let you decide how it ties in with the statements made by Sir Robert McCarrison: "During the period of my association with these people I never saw a case of asthenic dyspepsia, of gastric or duodenal ulcer, of appendicitis, of mucous colitis, of cancer. . . . Among these people, the abdomen oversensitive to nerve impressions, to fatigue, anxiety, or cold was unknown. Indeed their buoyant abdominal health has, since my return to the West, provided a remarkable contrast with the dyspeptic and colonic lamentations of our highly civilized communities."

Smoking in general is not an addiction in Hunza. The water-pipe or hubble-bubble is used by some of the people, usually at gatherings or ceremonies. It is then passed around in a wide circle, each one taking a puff or two. The women are included, but only after all the men have finished.

Some of the citizens use snuff. It is tobacco mixed with the ash of a plant called "sopa," which is indigenous to that area. They take the tobacco and the sopa ash, put in a dash of water, stir it up and mix it into a paste. Then they place gobs of this paste under their lip, exactly the same as the snuff chewer does in the West, although this practice has been dying out in the Western world.

Just how much of the health of the people of Hunza is due to the fact that they get a lot of sunlight? That is a most pertinent question and one that will take a lot

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
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CHAPTER 51

They Chose Years Ere Comfort

I WILL NOT go on record as stating that some Hunzans have sired children at the ripe old ages of 80, 90 or more, because I have no proof of such occurrences, although this information was relayed to me by some people of authority.

Yet, I would not disbelieve or laugh at that statement, because from my studies I have found that where the human body is fed natural proper food, the regenerating process in the body can be maintained for a long time. Yes, and all the faculties can be alert and keen well into a ripe old age. Most certainly the people of Hunza have lived and still live, in the main, according to the laws of nature.

I would, without hesitation, accept the fact that the people of Hunza are longer-lived than most people. Everything about their way of life seems to lend credence to the tales. I investigated, I asked questions and

165 I checked as thoroughly as possible and there are at least a dozen men in Hunza over 100 years old and no doubt a hundred over 90. Yet the oldest man that I met was 105 years old but by his appearance, his speech and his activity, he'll be around for a good many years.

No, I don't think anybody was trying to fool me about their ages. I can't see what they could gain by it. On the other hand, I don't think I'd be the easiest man in the world to fool. At least my friends don't think I would be. If and when you meet the Hunza people, you will find that you accept them as a fine, upstanding, honest race. Therefore I cannot see why they would necessarily lie about their ages. Of course [217] no vital statistics are kept in Hunza and therefore they cannot offer proof by means of birth certificates concerning their ages.

I met a few groups of men, all of whom claimed to be in their 70's and over, and they were a mighty healthy looking bunch of individuals. Most certainly the average group of people in any part of America at that age wouldn't remotely resemble that fine group of Hunzans.

164 I don't think that is hard to understand. People who have been denied luxuries and who have had to work all their lives and spend a lot of time in the open air doing manual labor should be healthy, especially when they have good natural foods.

[165] It is my sincere belief that the ages and the health of the people of Hunza have not been too greatly exaggerated.

It is possible that I have strange ideas, but I've always believed that physical work and exercise have a lot to do with a man's health. Well, in Hunza if exercise will make them happy and healthy, they should be the happiest and healthiest people in all the world. There

842 mentioned above and so do women who have reached the menopause age become pregnant, but it doesn't happen every day.

Siring children at 90 *and* 100 *years of age*—The only conclusive proof or record that I could find concerning men well up in years siring children was that of the Mir's grandfather, Sir Mohomed Nazim Khan, K.C.I.E. It is definitely recorded that he sired a son when he was in his 75th year.

Upon questioning and during discourse with the Mir, the resident doctor and the affected individuals themselves, it is clearly established that the siring of offspring at the age of 70 and upwards is quite common. Invariably it was revealed in these studies that the men had married younger women, their second or third wives. It is suggested that the answer lies somewhere close to this very important related fact.

165 [217] *Living to the age of* 140 *years.* The oldest man that I could find in Hunza was said to be 105 years old. I want to stress firmly that no vital statistics are kept in Hunza. Therefore it is not easy to establish any definite age or date. I will, however, accept this old man's age as being correct and established beyond doubt. The fact that he was alive before the Mir's grandfather was born (who died when 79 years of age in 1938) is ample proof that the statement is correct and true.

There are many people in Hunza over 90 years of age, quite a few over 95 years of age and some over 100 years.

142 165 *Their women are beautiful when they are* 70 *and* 80 *years old.* This I will agree is a statement that depends entirely upon a man's appreciation or understanding of beauty. I have seen old women of 80 who I thought were beautiful in a frail, wrinkled, grandmotherly way.

7:Tobe C,T-3 (1959)1960 AV7 Burusho AV7
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534 644 *The piano in the palace was brought by the Mir's grandfather.* This was stated in one of the books I read about Hunza.

The story from the Mir's own lips is, "The piano was brought to Gilgit via Bandipoor and Burzil Pass from Kashmir for the Political Agent who was British. It was installed in the Political Agent's house in Gilgit in 1895. In 1947 when the partition came, it was presented to me by the last British Political Agent, Colonel R. N. Bacon, along with the Union Jack which is unfurled in Gilgit. The piano was brought to Baltit on [482] the backs of 24 men."

164 *Disease is unknown in Hunza.* Oh, how I wish that were true! It was the fondest wish of my heart and soul when I left for Hunza that I could return and be able to attest the fact that disease is unknown in that country.

From definite assertions made by the doctor who was stationed at Aliabad in Hunza, it is true that such diseases as cancer, diabetes, heart disease and hypertension are absolutely unknown in Hunza. But there are other diseases, perhaps not as crucial but, nevertheless, maladies of a serious nature.

As more of civilization's luxuries become known and used in Hunza, it is assured that many more of the diseases of civilization, as yet unknown in Hunza, will make their way into that country.

•165 *No infant mortality*—I am unable to speak for the past, but at the present day infant mortality is known in Hunza. As mentioned elsewhere in this book, statistics are unavailable as no records are kept. But the present doctor in Aliabad forcibly states that infant mortality is a force to be reckoned with in Hunza at the present time.

125 One evening, I took a census of the
● 165 nine teen-age boys in my wood-carv-
[123] ing school. Of these, all from well-to-
do households, how many had seen
death in their immediate families?
165 Here was the roll:
651 Gohor Hayat: mother, three broth-
ers, two sisters; Sherin Beg: one
brother, one sister; Nur-ud-Din:
mother, two brothers, two sisters; Md.
Hamid: mother, one sister; Burhan
Shah: one brother, one sister; Nasar
Md.: mother, two brothers, one sister;
Mullah Madut: two brothers; Sulei-
man: one brother; Ghulam Rasul:
father. In a country fabled for the long
lives of its inhabitants, these are de-
pressingly typical Asian statistics.
165 Moreover, there is little reason to be-
576 lieve that any of the old men are really
as old as is claimed.

"How old are you?" I once asked a venerable patient.

"Ninety, Hazoor!" he answered.

"How do you know you're ninety?"

"Well, Hazoor, my hair is white, and I know I'm very old, and ninety is very old, so I must be ninety."

[124] My teen-aged assistant, Gohor Hayat, broke in impatiently, "Why do you
[217] waste time asking such questions?
[212] You know there are no records, because so few of my people can write!"

I had thought the old man might have a way of keeping count. "How old are you, Gohor Hayat?" I asked.

Gohor Hayat responded loftily, "I'm

[text continues on p. 43-C]

8:Clark N-5 (1948-1951) 1963
AV7 Burusho AV7
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[P43-C]

seventeen." Two years before he had told me he was thirteen.

Because the Hunzas, themselves, have no written records, I attempted to estimate longevity on the basis of physical signs of age.

THE elderly Hunzas, I discovered firsthand, show impressive dental evidence of being no older than sixty to seventy-five, not an unusual old-age in Western countries. Owing to a lack of vitamin D and milk in their diet, the great majority of Hunzas have soft teeth. A young man of about twenty-one, just cutting his wisdom teeth, typically has six-year molars that are worn flat. This allows a rate-of-wear calculation that is relatively dependable in determining age. For instance, a man over one hundred years old, at this rate, would have all his molars worn down to the jawbone, but this does not occur even in the teeth of the very oldest Hunzas.

"Purity" has been attributed to the Hunza diet, but the diet itself has seldom been more than superficially observed or related to its highly seasonal pattern. In the summertime the Hunza cuisine is limited, but not too bad. Chapatties—shaped like pancakes and made of coarse, whole-barley flour and water—form the staple, and salted tea is the beverage. Mulberries, fresh apricots, cucumbers, and occasionally sheep-milk butter, round out the